11/4/69

Dear Howard,

Last night I read the memoradna I copied yesterday morning. Here are a few brief comments.

Without my having read it, it turns out our discussion amounts to a fairly full one on your "Concerning the Trajectories of Possible Head Shots". There is this additional point. On the charts, consult WWII and learn which you used as the basis. The road-stripes are different in the different versions. One plat has 12, the other 13 stripes, as I recall it. You would have to use the earlier plat to use the stripes, and then you should compare with pictures taken as close to 11/22/63 as possible, for there is no reason to presume the complete accuracy of the earlier plat, especially since the FBI immediate made their own version from a tracing.

Your Dickey interview: Pp. 2-3, the "sighted in" part, is important to understand (this deals with lower velocity, which I presume you have abandoned). The overall point is that a bullet sighted in with any given rifle adds certain characteristics to the sighting-in process, as Dick can explain to you much better than I. But if this rifle had been sighted in with bullets of a certain weight, propelled by a certain charge, and then bullets of another weight, propelled by a different charge, were fired, the performance of the rifle would be different. To a degree, this is also trye of different ranges. This is not criticism, it is explanation, for your understanding.

On page 9 you get to what I asked you to carry further. "Dickey: Well, it wouldn't break apart" as well as "Well, I'd expett it to break apart, but it might not." Three specifics are missing here, one perhaps necessarily, if an expert cannot accurately give it (pattern of broken-off pieces). These are this expectable size of the pieces that break off, the degree of breaking apart and the manner in which the broken-off pieces might be expected to be distributed (example, along the line of the trajectory, or the initial force of the bullet, or diffused, at the point of explosion). This kind of bullet is designed to resist breaking apart. Therefore, it is important to understand whether or not the starelike particles are consistent with, even possible with, a hardened-jacketed military projectile. I believe this is not consistent, not according to design, and I am certain Dick agrees. His basis is scientific, mine is logical, as I explained it to you. Now in the specific case, we have to account for both kinds of breaking up, into the large particles in the car and the minute particles in the X-rays. Without feeding him without running the risk of getting either feedback or pro-WC propaganda, try and elicit the kind of breakup he would expect, knowing the kind of bullet and its design characteristics. For this purpose I suggest a general question, as we discussed it. There may well be an answer in the available literature or the non-secret tests he may have on file.

Overall comment on the interview: Your questions are too long, too explained. In your coming interview, avoid this. They complicate the reply, give the kind of man you will be seeing the excuse he needs to seize on the part he dislikes least for lengthy, pointless exposition and you'll not get a real answer. He is informed, therefore, make your questions breif and specific, with few parts. More questions can get around the multipart problem, where you consider each part of a multiple question important. Begin, as we discussed, by asking him to make the general, overall statement, then have short, direct questions. It is the essence of the method of the evasive lawyer to expound at great and seemingly erudite lengthy on the irrelevant and immaterial. I've been through it. They are skilled in gradually shifting fro what begins as seeming responsiveness to something entirely idfferent. You have to b pretty sharp to catch it sometimes. Glad to have met you. Good luck. Sincerely,